THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) To facilitate timely issue of passports by reducing the delays due to the time taken for police verification, since 1990 the government has allowed some passports to be issued on police report overdue basis if the police report is delayed for more than four weeks. In cases where a negative police report is received subsequently such passport applicants are contacted for clarification and where necessary, the passports are revoked or impounded.

(d) The Government remains vigilant in the grant of passports and strives to simplify the procedure for the issue of passports while keeping the security considerations in view. The officials of RPO, Hyderabad have acted as per the rules and no action is proposed against them.

Discussions with US President

2956. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM :

SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD :

SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN :

SHRI NAGENDRA NATH OJHA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether during the recent visit of the US President to New Delhi contentious issues like CTBT and Kashmir were kept only as sub-text and issues about convergence in Science and Technology, US interest in India in Indian information technology were mainly discussed;

(b) if so, what was the outcome of the discussions on the different contentions and other issues like US interests in Indian Information Technology; and

(c) the details of the other discussions took place with US President along with the outcome thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) Both sides regarded the visit of President Clinton to India as an opportunity to open a new chapter in bilateral relations and to build a closer and qualitatively new relationship on the basis of equality and mutual respect. The two sides discussed all aspects of bilateral

relations, including disarmament and non-proliferation issues, in a warm, friendly and constructive atmosphere. The two sides focussed on the many shared values, interest and opportunities for mutually beneficial co-operation. They also stated that they would seek to resolve all differences through constructive dialogue.

(b) India and the United States have agreed to increase co-operation internationally on issues of common concern and enhance bilateral co-operation in trade and commerce, finance and investment, information technology and other knowledge-based industries, energy and environment, science and technology and health. Towards this end, the two sides have agreed on an architecture of a broad-based, multi-layered institutional dialogue, covering dialogue on political and security matter, economic and commercial ties, counter-terrorism, energy and environment and science and technology;

(c) In addition to the bilateral relationship, the two sides also discussed regional issues, Prime Minister and President Clinton shared deep concerns over the setback to democracy and growing extremism in Pakistan. The two leaders agreed that problems between the countries of the region should be resolved peacefully by the concerned countries themselves and abjuration of violence and acts of terror is required for facilitating a meaningful dialogue.

Visit of former Pakistan Foreign Secretary to New Delhi

2957. SHRI ABANI ROY : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan has recently visited New Delhi and held discussion with Prime Minister and other high dignitaries;

(b) if so, the details of discussions held and outcome thereof.

(c) whether Government have assessed the impact of his visit to India on relation with Pakistan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) Government are aware that a former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan visited India recently. However, the former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan did not hold discussions with either officials or senior dignitaries of Government.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.